Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Burner membrane comprising at least one layer consisting of a needled fiber web which is compressed to a porosity of between 60% and 95%, and that is constructed of heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, wherein the fiber web is needled in one step and compressed **to the porosity of between 60% and 95% in a subsequent** ~~**in a different**~~ step.

2. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the porosity of the needled fiber web is between 80% and 95%.

3. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 5 μm and 150 μm.

4. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 3, in which the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10 μm and 50 μm.

5. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 400 g/m^2 and 4000 g/m^2.

6. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 5, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2.

7. (Original) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, which is provided with a regular pattern of perforations over at least a portion of its surface.

8. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, wherein said steel fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

9. (Withdrawn) Method of manufacturing a burner membrane according to Claim 1, comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a fiber web composed of metal fibers;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to said porosity.

10. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a fiber web composed of metal fibers;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step;

(d) wherein the membrane is not sintered.

11. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 10, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

12. (Previously Presented) A burner component for a gas burner, comprising a surface burner comprising the burner membrane of Claim 1.

13. (Currently Amended) Burner membrane comprising at least one layer comprising a needled fiber web which is compressed to a porosity of between 60% and 95%, and which comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, wherein the fiber web is needled in one step and compressed **to the porosity of between 60% and 95% in a subsequent** ~~**in a different**~~ step, wherein the burner membrane is not sintered.

14. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the porosity of the compressed needled fiber web is between 80% and 95%.

15. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 5 μm and 150 μm.

16. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 15, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10 μm and 50 μm.

17. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 400 g/m^2 and 4000 g/m^2.

18. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 17, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2.

19. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, which is provided with a regular pattern of perforations over at least a portion of its surface.

20. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein said steel fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

21. (Withdrawn) Method of manufacturing a burner membrane according to Claim 13, comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to said porosity.

22. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step;

(d) wherein the membrane is not sintered.

23. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

24. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method consisting of the following:

a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers, wherein the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10 μm and 50 μm;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity of between 80% and 95% to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step; and

(d) perforating the burner membrane in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface with a laser;

wherein the membrane is not sintered, and wherein the weight of the fiber web is between 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2.

25. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

26. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

27. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

28. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

29. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the desired porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

30. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately 10 μm and 50 μm.

31. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2.

32. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 10, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

33. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the needled fiber web is formed from one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

34. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

35. (Previously Presented) The burner membrane of Claim 13, wherein the burner membrane is coated with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

36. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 10, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

37. (Previously Presented) The burner membrane of Claim 1, wherein the burner membrane is coated with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

38. (Withdrawn) Burner membrane according to Claim 22, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

39. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, wherein substantially all of the volume of the burner membrane is in a compressed state.

40. (Previously Presented) A burner component for a gas burner, comprising a surface burner comprising the burner membrane of Claim 13.

41. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately 1000 g/m^2 and 2500 g/m^2.

42. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately 10 μm and 50 μm.

43. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

44. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

45. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

46. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

47. (Cancelled).

48. (New) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the weight of the fiber web is at least 1000 g/m^2.

49. (New) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the weight of the fiber web is at least 1000 g/m^2.

50. (New) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, wherein the burner membrane is adapted to be a burner membrane for a surface burner.

51. (New) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the burner membrane is adapted to be a burner membrane for a surface burner.